

**SPEECH BY CABINET SECRETARY FOR MINISTRY
EDUCATION DR. EZEKIEL MACHOGU, CBS, EGH,
DURING THE 70TH GRADUATION CEREMONY OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI ON FRIDAY, 15TH
DECEMBER 2023 AT 7.30AM**

- + Prof. AmukowaAnangwe, Ag as the Chancellor,**
- + Chancellors and Vice Chancellors of Various Universities,**
- + High Commissioner and Ambassadors,**
- + Distinguished guests,**
- + Faculty members,**
- + Graduates,**
- + Ladies and gentlemen,**

Good morning,

Returning to my alma mater today, in the distinguished role of Guest of Honour during the incredible 70th Graduation ceremony, is one thing that has left me very jubilant this morning.

Over the 70-year decorated history of graduations, The University of Nairobi has produced many education greats, the majority of whom have made tremendous contribution to the development of our country.

Some of the big names that quickly come to mind include His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya Dr. William Samoei Ruto who stunningly obtained his three degrees from this university. Other prominent names include our Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, myself, National Assembly Speaker Moses Wamangala. This list is certainly endless.

I must therefore, this morning, extend my warmest congratulations to the graduating class of 2023 from this prestigious University and for joining the roll of honour that includes the Who is Who in Kenya and indeed the world.

As you graduate to the world of work, you must carry the university's flag even higher than those who have come before you. I have absolute confidence that you can do this.

Indeed, today is a momentous occasion that marks not only the culmination of your hard work and dedication but also the beginning of a new chapter in your lives. Your achievements fill us with great pride, and I hope that you recognize the limitless opportunities that lie ahead with the power of quality education.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I must state that it is not enough for this university to shine in its academic excellence in Kenya. Indeed we are often given the good news that this university has been ranked among the top ten best universities in Africa.

I wish to challenge you to raise the standards even higher and enter the charts of the globe. On this sense, I ask all our universities in Kenya to continue reviewing their standards with a view to ensuring that they are in tandem with the industry needs. We must therefore

ensure we eliminate any duplication of programmes in universities and expand to all areas of innovation and research necessary to keep our local universities to compete with giants such as MIT, Oxford, among others.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Kenya Kwanza Government is determined to support our universities in their reforms trajectory that will ensure quality teaching research and innovation for all our students and academics.

The greatest marker of this Government's commitment to reform universities can best be exemplified by the robust measures that we have put in place to pull the institutions for their economic crisis, which had sunk them into pending bills amounting to Sh70.7 Billion.

You may be aware that we are currently rolling out the New Higher Education Funding model, to which the Government has already disbursed Ksh9.2 Billion in loans and scholarships to first students in our universities.

The new funding model places students at the center and accurately aligns government funding to the accurate cost of programmes in each university. Our aim is to alleviate the burden of debt on universities, and we are actively exploring avenues to address the substantial debts owed by universities to other government agencies such as the KRA, NSSF, and NHIF.

I wish to thank our Vice Chancellors for keeping our First Year students in their institutions to attend to their lecturers as we processed their loans and scholarships.

We urge our Universities to bear with us as we systematically and methodically address their financial difficulties together, and in line with the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms Report's recommendations.

Allow me to assure you that the Ministry will progressively work towards resolving all your concerns in an environment of dialogue so we ensure that access to quality education remains unimpeded.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Government is also continuing to explore opportunities for finding jobs for skilled workers abroad. This spirit is precisely led by His Excellency the President, Dr. William Samoei Ruto, who has established the State Department for Diaspora to facilitate and support the aspirations of our talented and ambitious youth beyond our borders.

This is testimony that we are working tirelessly to create avenues for your success, both locally and globally.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The transition from the 8-4-4 curriculum to the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) is currently underway. This new curriculum is designed to equip our nation with the necessary skills for industrialization and to mitigate the high rates of unemployment. Under the CBC, it is essential for universities to collaborate closely with industries to produce graduates with the right skill sets demanded by the market.

To this end, universities must establish training facilities, secure resources, and foster global partnerships that ensure our educational quality is on par with the best in the world.

I want to invite the Alumni community to feel the urgency of supporting their universities now than before.

The University of Nairobi Alumni is a huge resource that is grossly underutilized by the University. I appeal to the large Alumni Community to get involved in supporting various needs of their Universities through scholarships, attachments to students and infrastructure development.

This year, we bid farewell to the long-serving Chancellor, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi. Her dedication and exceptional leadership have contributed tremendously to the growth, improved governance, and expanded strategic partnerships of this university. On behalf of the government and the Ministry of Education, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Vijoo Rattansi for her invaluable service to the people of Kenya. Her generosity is exemplified in the large number of scholarships that she gives to the needy students each year.

We are pleased to have her continue serving as the Chair of the University of Nairobi Foundation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the University of Nairobi and other tertiary institutions for their unwavering commitment to providing a conducive learning environment.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the need for universities to capitalize on their excess capacity and explore opportunities to attract more international students.

Engaging with students from diverse backgrounds will not only enrich the educational experience but also foster cultural exchange, understanding, and collaboration.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the University of Nairobi and its Confucius Institute for their immense support in the teaching of the Chinese language in colleges and high schools. I also express appreciation to the Chinese government for their sponsorship of teachers and provision of learning resources to the Kenyan government. Together, we are nurturing a generation

equipped with international language skills and intercultural competence.

Finally, as we conclude this ceremony, I wish all graduands, their parents, and the entire university community a joyous Christmas and a prosperous New Year in 2024. May your future endeavors be filled with success, happiness, and fulfillment.

Thank you, and congratulations once again to the graduating class of 2023.

I now wish all the graduands and their families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2023.

Thank you very much and God bless you